



DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Bay Pines residents achieve unique position

From Dane Ross, Director

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Bay Pines Center is the regional detention and treatment center operated by DHS Bureau of Juvenile Justice in the Upper Peninsula. The facility sits in the woods on the edge of Escanaba. It is a beautiful facility in an even more beautiful setting. The facility houses 40 young men and women ages 12-19 that were accused or adjudicated for felony crimes. They work on the values and behaviors that brought them to the justice system, pursue their education, and learn social skills while in placement.

It is generally a happy and busy place. However, in February in the U.P., opportunities for positive self-expression can be pretty hard to come by. For the past three years the young men in treatment at Bay Pines have found a way to channel their energy in a unique competitive way. They race in the annual Trenary Outhouse Race.

The Trenary Outhouse Classic, as it is called, occurs in the little town of Trenary in the center of the U.P. The race, in its thirteenth year, continues to grow in contestants and enthusiasm. There were

over 40 entries this year.

Basically, it is a race of

homemade outhouses on skis. The outhouses are pushed – from behind by two people — 500 feet down a snow-covered track in the middle of Main Street.

The young men of Bay Pines Center build and decorate their own entry. Classic rules specify an outhouse must be 3 feet by 4 feet by 6 feet and contain a toilet seat and roll of toilet paper. The design beyond these restrictions depends on the imagination of the builders. The Bay Pines outhouse was called the “Drop It Like It’s Hot.”

In their first time out two years ago, the male treatment group came in second place; last year they came in sixth place. The young men that make up the treatment group this year brought home the first place trophy. The trophy is appropriately in the shape

of a outhouse. The group also received \$75 dollars for first place in the “big kids” category.

In the 11-plus years Bay Pines Center has been open, this is the first winners’ trophy any group has won. We are looking forward to building a trophy shelf to display our miniature outhouse. We are almost as proud of our youths’ achievement as they are. We think we can safely say we are the only juvenile treatment facility in the state that can claim to be “outhouse champions.”



Bay Pines Center winning entry – “Drop It Like It’s Hot”.



Race path from starting position.

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Agencies network at the Resource Bonanza in Grand Rapids in March.



Kent DHS workers (l-r) Amy Kelly and Alana Davis at the Kent County DHS booth at the Resource Bonanza.

Kent County's "Resource Bonanza"

From Mary A. Schoen, Contract Monitor
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March 15 marked a day of true community collaboration in Kent County.

The Department of Human Services along with the Family Resource Council and ACCESS (All County Churches Emergency Support System) teamed up to provide one arena for individuals who work in the human services industry to learn about all the services available in our community.

More than 90 area agencies participated in the "Resource Bonanza" staffing booths to explain the services they offer. Lots of information and handouts were available for attendees to take back to their workplaces. It was held at the Paul I. Phillips Recreational Center, operated by the city of Grand Rapids and located next door to our DHS office. **Michelle Seigo**, the volunteer coordinator for Kent County, was one of the main organizers from DHS with many additional DHS staff helping in the setup and cleanup at the site.

National Alcohol Screening Day – Thursday, April 6

National Alcohol Screening Day is acknowledged one day a year to draw attention to alcohol use and potential abuse. Since 2000 the **state of Michigan Employee Service Program** has sponsored a free, anonymous and confidential alcohol screening program for state of Michigan employees who may have questions on the use and abuse of alcohol.

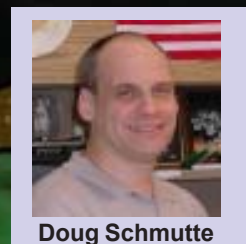
Over the past five years almost 2,000 employees have completed a screening either by calling toll-free 1-800-887-5676 (available 24 hours 7 days a week) or going online at www.michigan.gov/esp and clicking on "Interactive Screening Program" (keyword: espmi).

For more information, or if you would like to schedule a free confidential session with an Employee Service Program counselor, please call 373-7630 or 1-800-521-1377 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Professional counselors are available to provide telephone or face-to-face free confidential counseling.



Gift starts great week in Van Buren County

From Lori Jerue, Office Manager
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Doug Schmutte

March 27 started out as a typical Monday morning at Van Buren County DHS. Staff didn't know they were about to receive a beautiful gift!

Family independence specialist Doug Schmutte has been working on a special, secret project since January. He'd invested his own funds and over 100 hours of his own personal time in designing and creating a spectacular stained glass window for display in the office (pictured here).

The window, titled "South Haven Pier at Sunset," measures 4 feet by 2 feet and is done in breathtaking colors. An impromptu unveiling ceremony was held at 9 a.m. and, needless to say, Monday turned out to be a great way to start a workweek.

Kalamazoo warms clients during winter months

From Kelly Richards, Family Independence Manager
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During the months of December, January and February, clients who visited the Kalamazoo County DHS were welcomed with a special treat - a chance to go home with a new hat, pair of gloves, a scarf, or even socks! These items were put on our Angel Tree in the lobby and were available to anyone who wanted or needed them. In all, we distributed over 925 items to our clients for themselves and/or their children.

To stock our tree we held a "casual for a cause" day and accepted donations of either items for the tree or money. With the money we were able to purchase a large amount of gloves for the tree from a local discount store. Over half of the items distributed were hats enthusiastically hand-knit by around 20 staff members on their own time with yarn they generously supplied themselves. Some of these staff members were new to knitting and were very excited not only to learn a new hobby but to be able to help our clients as well.



Pictured are some of the "Kalamazoo DHS happy hatters" (left to right Kelly Richards, Sandy Bailey, Sandy Lemley, Sue Lang, Sherry Thomas-Cloud and Bess Klobucher) standing by a table full of almost 400 of the items that were eventually placed on the Angel Tree.

Our clients were very appreciative and we received several nice thank you notes from them including one who said: "Thank you so much for the new knitted hat! I prayed for one and my prayer was answered." Another said, "Thank you so much for taking the time to make these hats for people in need this season like my family."

Date: Dec. 29, 2005
To: Patty Buskirk
DHS Office of Child Support
Subj: Lanny Pollard

I've never done this before but I need to do it now because of the exceptional help that I received from Lanny Pollard. I stopped receiving child support assistance over three years ago for my son. I made many calls, wrote several letters and emails to the state of Texas (where I lived) to enforce my court order but no one would help me. I had pretty much given up.

I've been in Michigan now over a year so I transferred my case here. When I called for status of my case they had told me that Lanny Pollard was my case worker so I contacted him. (I) explained my whole situation to him and from the point of our first discussion he went above and beyond for me. No one has ever done what Lanny did. He was sincere and understanding. Not once did he make me feel like I was bothering him or putting him out like the Attorney General's office in the state of Texas.

I received a letter Dec. 28 in the mail stating that the father was found and a notice of withholding was sent to his employer. I just wanted to let you to know what a blessing Lanny has been to my son and I and how much I appreciate everything that he has done.

Name withheld

Pottersville, Mich.

■ *Patty Buskirk and Lanny Pollard are staff members of DHS Office of Child Support; Pollard is a child support specialist and Buskirk is a district manager. The letter writer's name was withheld to protect the confidentiality of the other parent. Maria Candy from DHS Office of Child Support submitted this for publication.*

State children's hospital to celebrate golden anniversary

Contact: David Dent, President

Hawthorn Center Association

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Hawthorn Center, the children's psychiatric hospital operated by Michigan Department of Community Health in Northville Township, will celebrate its 50th anniversary this spring. Hawthorn Center has provided services to over 30,000 children and adolescents since it opened in 1956.

"A substantial number of our patients are DHS wards and we have had the pleasure of interacting with a great many fine employees of your department as members of these children's treatment teams," said David Dent, president of Hawthorn Center Association.



Hawthorn Center

The association – a private charitable organization dedicated to supporting mental health services for children – is organizing an anniversary celebration. The association will sponsor a clinical conference, "Treating Children and Youth with Explosive Behavior Disorders", May 19 at Schoolcraft College at the VistaTech Center. The association is sponsoring a dinner banquet immediately following the conference.

"We are very excited to support this major event," Dent said. "The conference will appeal to professionals who work with children and adolescents in various settings – outpatient, inpatient, and schools.

"The banquet will be a true opportunity to gather with state and community leaders to celebrate Hawthorn Center's history and to honor those who did so much over the years to create its traditions of excellence."

Please visit the Hawthorn Center Association Web site to register for the conference and banquet:

www.hawthorncenterassociation.org

Hawthorn Center information: <http://www.michigan.gov/mdch> and search for "Hawthorn Center."

Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
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